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STAN LEE PROUDLY PRESENTS
CHRIS CLAREMONT'S FINAL ISSUE OF THE X-MEN:

Fallout!

By
CHRIS
CLAREMONT
and JIM
LEE

OFFICIALLY SPEAKING,
FIFTY MILES HIGH IS
WHERE SPACE BEGINS.

THE BOUNDARY ISN'T THAT PRECISE, OF
COURSE; ON A MOLECULAR LEVEL, EARTH'S
ATMOSPHERE GOES ON FOR QUITE A WAY.
FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES THOUGH,
THIS IS CONSIDERED TO BE AS HIGH AS
HUMAN BEINGS CAN FLY IN ANYTHING
LESS THAN A ROCKET.

SCOTT WILLIAMS
INKER

TOM ORZECOWSKI
LETTERER

JOE ROSAS
COLORIST

BOB HARRAS
EDITOR

TOM DeFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

A RESTRICTION THAT EVIDENTLY DOES NOT APPLY TO THE UNCANNY X-MEN.

I MAY HATE APOCALYPSE FOR GRAFTING THESE BIONIC WINGS IN PLACE OF THE REAL ONES I WAS BORN WITH...

... BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT, STORM, THEY ARE A PIECE OF WORK.

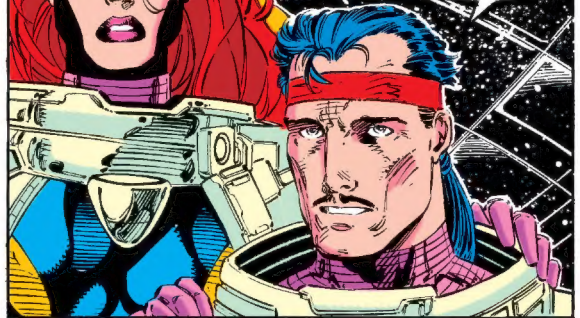
WITHOUT THEM, I COULD NEVER SOAR SO HIGH, EVEN WITH YOUR WINDS TO HELP.

STORM'S REACHED HER LIMIT.

SHE'S FOCUSED HER POWER TO ITS UTMOST, BUT THE AIR IS TOO THIN AT THIS ALTITUDE TO SUSTAIN EVEN A GHOST OF A WIND.

HER BEST IS PLENTY GOOD ENOUGH, RED. SHE'S PULLED THIS GLIDER A FAIR PIECE HIGHER THAN WE EXPECTED.

SHOULD MAKE YOUR JOB THAT MUCH EASIER.

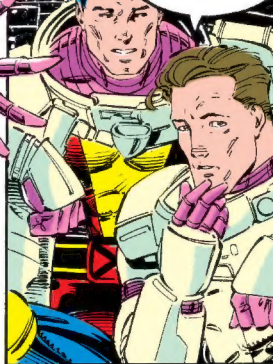


I HATE THIS. I REALLY HATE THIS.

I MEAN, FLYING'S BAD ENOUGH -- BUT IN SPACE? SHTO?

AND WHY DOES THE STUPID PLANE HAVE TO BE TRANSPARENT?!

FORGE SAID IT WAS TO MAKE US FUNCTIONALLY INVISIBLE, BOTH TO ELECTRONIC AND OPTICAL SCANNERS.



THAT IS WHY IT IS A GLIDER...

I AM AFRAID, MY FRIEND, THIS MAY BE AS FAR AS WE GO.

YEAH, I KNOW-- WITH NO METAL ELEMENTS, SUCH AS ENGINES, FOR MAGNETO TO DETECT.

YE'D BEST PRAY THE INDIAN'S RIGHT, ICEMAN ME BOYO, OR WE'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD.



WE'VE A PRECIOUS THIN CHANCE AS IT IS O' SAVIN' THE DAY...

... WHAT WITH OUR CAPTURED TEAM-MATES ANNOUNCIN' THEY'VE SWITCHED SIDES AN' JOINED UP WITH THE X-MEN'S ARCH-ENEMY.



"NOT T' MENTION
THE **GREAT**
POWERS DOWN
BELOW..."

"...BOUND-AN'-
DETERMINED TO
TAKE A MESS
AN' TURN IT
INTO A ROYAL
CATASTROPHE.

"NOT SIMPLY
FOR US
MUTANTS,
BUT F'R THE
WHOLE SAD,
SORRY
PLANET!"

YOU CAN'T DO
THIS! SUPPOSE
YOU DON'T
DESTROY
ASTEROID M,
BUT SIMPLY
KNOCK IT OUT
OF ORBIT?

ANYONE WANNA
IMAGINE THE **DAMAGE**
THAT HUNK O' ROCK'LL
DO WHEN IT HITS
THE GROUND?

THE FIRING
TRAJECTORY,
COLONEL FURY,
HAS BEEN CALCU-
LATED TO BLAST
THE TARGET AWAY
FROM EARTH
AND INTO DEEP
SPACE.

AN' IF
THEY'RE
WRONG?

YOU
WOULD
RATHER
WE DO
NOTHING,
COLONEL?

I DON'T SEE
THE SENSE O'
STAMPEDIN' INTO
A COURSE OF
ACTION WE MAY
ALL REGRET.

PLASMA
CANNON
APPROACH-
ING OPTIMUM
FIRING
POINT.

YOU'RE A
SOLDIER,
FURY. I'D'VE
THOUGHT
YOU, OF ALL
PEOPLE,
WOULD UNDER-
STAND.

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN,
CHIEF
ANDER-
SON?

THIS IS A WAR,
AMBASSADOR
KAMANEV!

AND WE EITHER
WIN IT OUTRIGHT,
OR YIELD OUR-
SELVES-- AND ALL
HUMANITY-- UP TO
MAGNETO AS
VIRTUAL SLAVES!
ALLOWING HIM TO
LORD IT OVER US
LIKE SOME
ANCIENT GOD ON
MOUNT OLYMPUS.

YES, PEOPLE WILL
SUFFER AND PEOPLE
MAY WELL DIE-- AS MY
COUNTRYMEN HERE IN
GENOSHA HAVE
SUFFERED AND DIED AT
THE HANDS OF THAT
MUTANT MADMAN AND
HIS PET TERRORISTS--
BUT SOMETIMES THAT'S
THE PRICE DEMANDED
OF SURVIVAL.

AND
FREEDOM!

MY
GOVERNMENT'S
POSITION,
PRECISELY.

AND YOURS AS
WELL, COLONEL FURY.

IN THIS,
MOSCOW AND
WASHINGTON
ARE IN FULL
AGREE-
MENT.

OUR HEADS OF
STATE ARE THE
MAKERS OF POLICY,
DR. COOPER.

WE ARE MERELY ITS
EXECUTORS. AND OUR
ORDERS ARE PLAIN.

DIRECTLY THE PLASMA
CANNON ACHIEVES ITS
FIRING COORDINATES,
**ASTEROID M-- AND
ALL ABOARD--**

NO
MATTER
THE
COST?

--ARE TO BE
DESTROYED.

THEY'RE
SERIOUS.

THEY'RE
SCARED,
MS. GREY.

IN WAYS WE CAN'T
EVEN CONCEIVE OF,
BECAUSE-- EVEN THOUGH
WE X-MEN ARE THE GOOD
GUYS-- WE'RE THE ONES
THEY'RE SCARED OF.

THE FUTURE THEY SEE, JEAN, IS
ONE WHERE THEY'RE DESTINED TO
BE PERPETUAL VICTIMS, INNOCENTS
CAUGHT BETWEEN BEINGS WHOSE
POWERS THEY BARELY COMPREHEND
AND HAVEN'T A HOPE OF MATCHING.
WHERE THEY'LL ALWAYS BE AT
OUR MERCY.

MUTANTS,
SUPER-
BEINGS,
GODS, ALIENS,

A GUY WHO STICKS TO WALLS AT
ONE EXTREME, A CREATURE WHO
EATS PLANETS AT THE OTHER; EACH
ONE THAT COMES INTO BEING,
THEY FEEL, DIMINISHES THE
REST OF HUMANITY, ORDINARY
HOMO SAPIENS, THAT LITTLE
BIT MORE.

THEY LOOK AROUND,
THEY SEE A WORLD THAT'S
SLIPPING MORE AND MORE
OUT OF THEIR CONTROL.

THIS WAY, THEY
DEMONSTRATE THEY
MEAN BUSINESS. THEY
MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO PUT
THE GENETIC GENIE BACK IN
ITS BOTTLE, BUT THEY'RE
STILL DETERMINED TO
BE ITS MASTER.

AND
THEREBY
PROVE
MAGNETO
RIGHT.

HOW'S
YOUR
PSILINK
WITH THE
PROF? YOU
SURE IT
CAN'T BE
TAGGED?

FORGE,
I'VE BEEN
CHARLES
XAVIER'S
STUDENT
SINCE I WAS
A CHILD.

WE'RE
TELE-
PATHICALLY
BONDED ON
LEVELS NO
ONE CAN
TOUCH.

THE PROFES-
SOR IS WELL.
BUT THE
SITUATION IS
AS BAD AS WE
FEARED.

...THEY WILL
FIGHT US AS
TENACIOUSLY
AND COU-
RAGEOUSLY
AS THEY
WOULD THEIR
DEADLIEST
FOES.

CYCLOPS
AND HIS
TEAM...

... HAVE
WHOLEHEARTEDLY
EMBRACED MAG-
NETO'S CAUSE.
AND IF WE DO
NOT FOLLOW
THEIR LEAD...

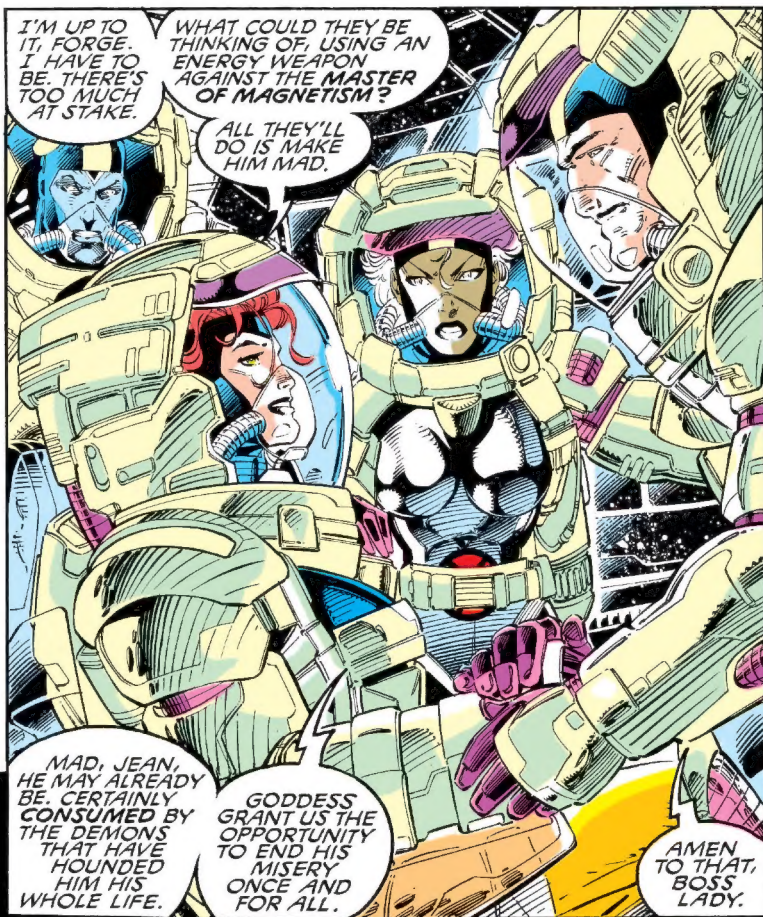


BE A MOOT POINT ONCE THAT PLASMA CANNON STARTS TAKING POT-SHOTS.

STORM AND ARCH-ANGEL ARE THROUGH THE AIRLOCK.

EVERYBODY SEAL YOUR HELMETS AND CHARGE YOUR PRESSURE SUITS.

COMIN' UP ON SHOWTIME, RED.



I'M UP TO IT, FORGE. I HAVE TO BE. THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE.

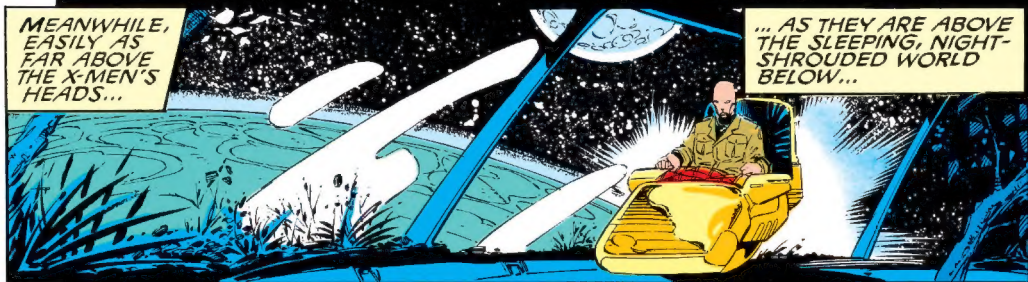
WHAT COULD THEY BE THINKING OF, USING AN ENERGY WEAPON AGAINST THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM?

ALL THEY'LL DO IS MAKE HIM MAD.

MAD, JEAN, HE MAY ALREADY BE. CERTAINLY CONSUMED BY THE DEMONS THAT HAVE HOUNDED HIM HIS WHOLE LIFE.

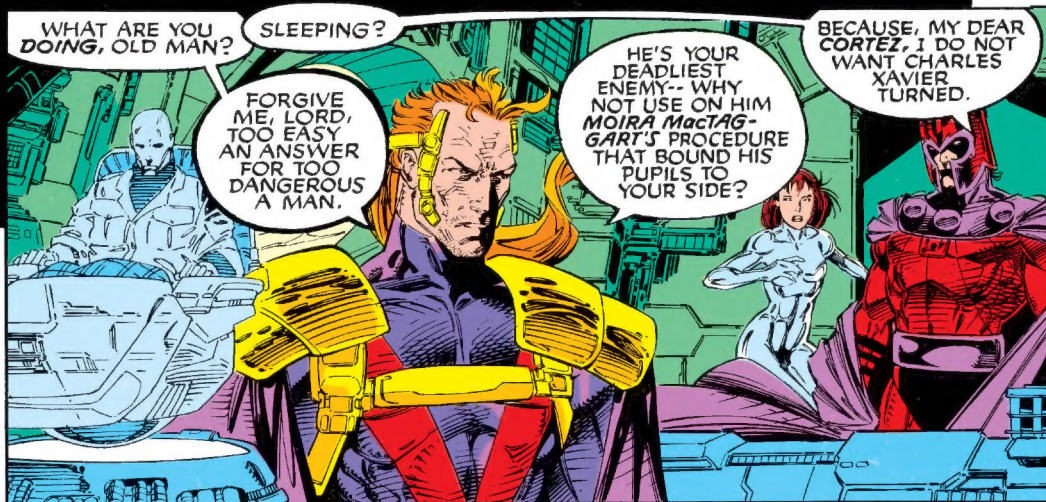
GODDESS GRANT US THE OPPORTUNITY TO END HIS MISERY ONCE AND FOR ALL.

AMEN TO THAT, BOSS LADY.



MEANWHILE, EASILY AS FAR ABOVE THE X-MEN'S HEADS...

... AS THEY ARE ABOVE THE SLEEPING, NIGHT-SHROUDED WORLD BELOW...



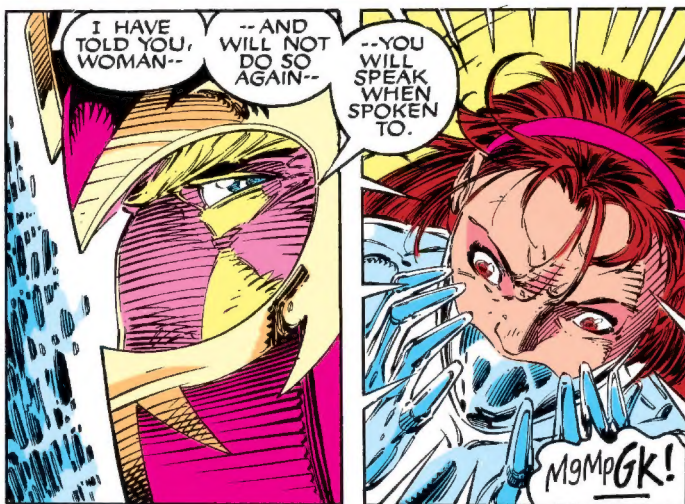
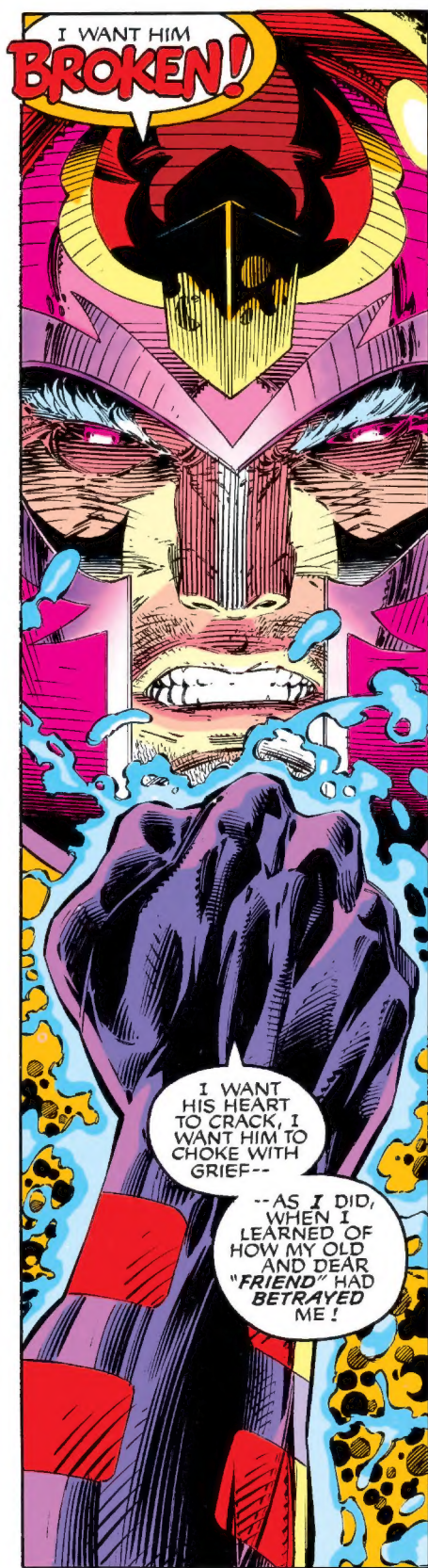
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, OLD MAN?

SLEEPING?

FORGIVE ME, LORD, TOO EASY AN ANSWER FOR TOO DANGEROUS A MAN.

HE'S YOUR DEADLIEST ENEMY-- WHY NOT USE ON HIM MOIRA MacTARGART'S PROCEDURE THAT BOUND HIS PUPILS TO YOUR SIDE?

BECAUSE, MY DEAR CORTEZ, I DO NOT WANT CHARLES XAVIER TURNED.





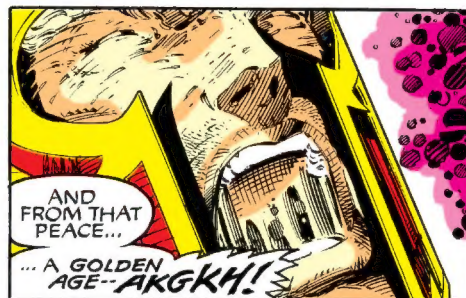
DID IT GIVE YOU PLEASURE, PLAYING GOD? HOW YOU MUST HAVE LAUGHED, YOU AND XAVIER...

...PROGRAMMING ME--THROUGH, WHAT IS THE PHRASE, "BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION"--TO FIT YOUR CONCEPTION OF THE MAN I SHOULD BE.

MAKING EVERY DECISION, EVERY CHOICE I'VE MADE SINCE, A SHAM. MAKING ME LITTLE MORE THAN YOUR PUPPET!

ONLY FAIR TURNABOUT, USING THE SAME PROCESS ON THE X-MEN. AND FOR THEIR OWN GOOD, TOO MY ENDS JUSTIFYING THE MEANS THIS TIME.

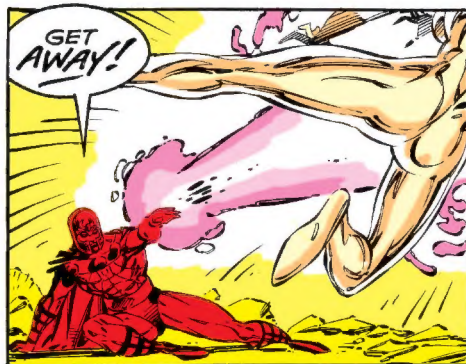
THROUGH THEM, I SHALL BRING PEACE TO THIS GLOBE.



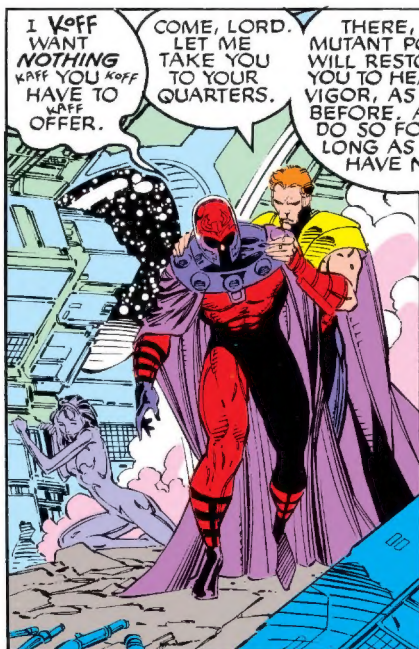
AND FROM THAT PEACE...
...A GOLDEN AGE--AKGKHH!



MAGNETO! LET ME HELP!
KOFF KAFF HARGKGH KAFF KOFF



GET AWAY!

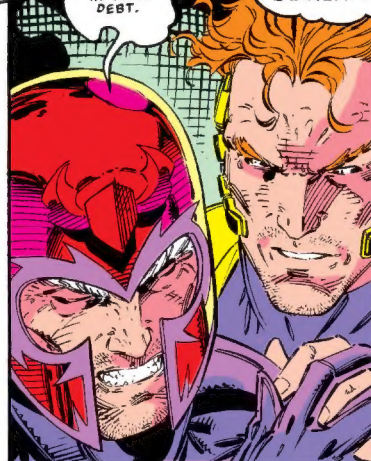


I KOFF WANT NOTHING KAFF YOU KOFF HAVE TO KAFF OFFER.

COME, LORD. LET ME TAKE YOU TO YOUR QUARTERS.

THERE, MY MUTANT POWER WILL RESTORE YOU TO HEALTH AND VIGOR, AS IT HAS BEFORE, AND WILL DO SO FOR AS LONG AS YOU HAVE NEED.

THANK YOU, FABIAN.
I AM IN YOUR DEBT.

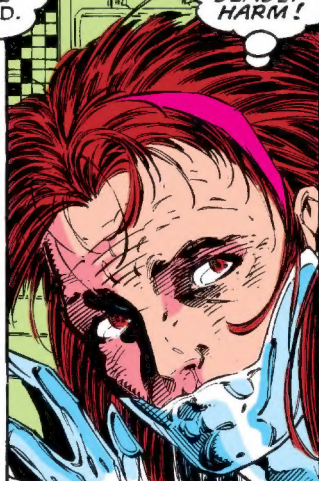


NO, MAGNETO, NO! DO Y' NOT SEE? THE EFFECTS OF EACH "HEALING" SESSION WEAR OFF MORE AN' MORE QUICKLY AN' LEAVE YOU MORE AN' MORE DEBILITATED.

AN' HE KNOWS IT!

IT'S NOT KINDNESS FABIAN CORTEZ IS DOIN' YOU, MAGNETO...

...IT'S DEADLY HARM!

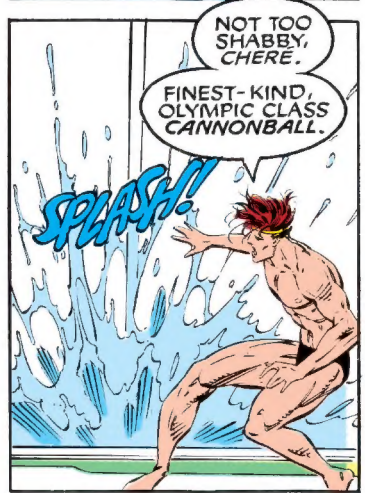
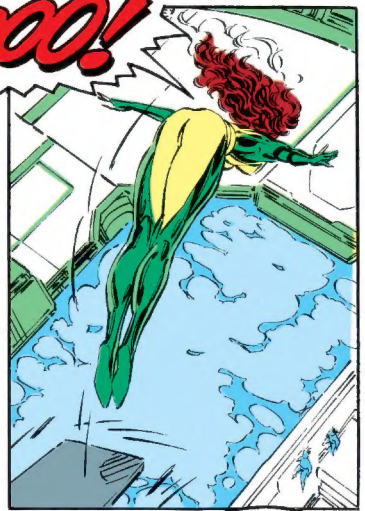


AT ROUGHLY THAT MOMENT, ELSEWHERE IN THE HUGE ASTEROID...

...CYCLOPS'S TEAM OF X-MEN ARE ASSUMING THEIR NEW ROLES AS MAGNETO'S LATEST ACOLYTES AS THOUGH BORN TO THEM.

WAH-

HOOOO!



NOT TOO SHABBY, THERE.

FINEST-KIND, OLYMPIC CLASS CANNONBALL.

SPLASH!

YOU LIKE, GAMBIT?

I LIKE THAT, AN' MORE.

BETTER WATCH IT. AH TOUCH YOUR BARE HAND WITH MINE, AH'LL ABSORB YOUR POWERS AN' PSYCHE AN' ALL YOUR MEM'RIES.

MAYBE.

MAYBE NOT.

WAN' TAKE THE RISK, LI'L RIVER RAT?

I... I...

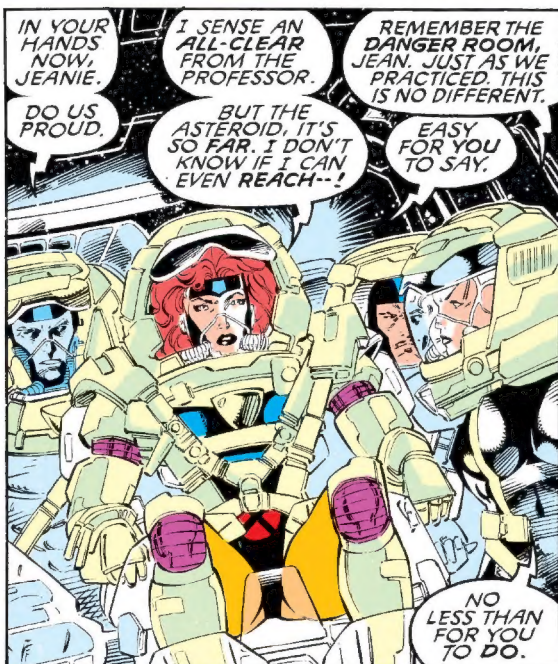


No!

AH'M SORRY, GAMBIT, AH-- WELL NOW, AIN'T THAT A SIGHT!

FIRST TIME-- EVER-- AH B' LIEVE...

...AH'VE SEEN THAT CAJUN CHARMER THROWN OFF-BALANCE.



THINK OF IT AS THE ULTIMATE GRAPPLING HOOK...

... A STRAND OF ENERGY CAST ACROSS THE GULF OF MILES...

... BUT THEN HOLD FAST AS JEAN, USING ONLY THE POWER OF HER THOUGHTS AND HER INNATE STRENGTH OF WILL...

... HAULS THE GLIDER UPWARDS, HAND OVER MENTAL HAND...

... KNOWING THAT THE SLIGHTEST SLIP, THE MOST MOMENTARY WEAKNESS, WILL DOOM THEM ALL.

BY HEAVEN--!

IF ONLY I COULD ADD MY PSYCHIC STRENGTH TO MINE.

BUT MAGNETO'S INHIBITORS PREVENT MY UTILIZING MY OWN PSIONIC POWERS.

"IN THIS CASE, MY DEAR CHILD CAN DEPEND ON NONE BUT HERSELF."

THERE'S SOMETHIN' OUT THERE!

SO FAINT THOUGH I CAN BARELY SEE IT.

... THAT MUST NOT ONLY LATCH ONTO ASTEROID M AS IT SWINGS PAST ALONG ITS ORBITAL TRACK...

COMPANY COMIN', MOIRA?

WOLVERINE!

Oh NO
NO!

COMIN' TO THE RESCUE, ARE THEY?

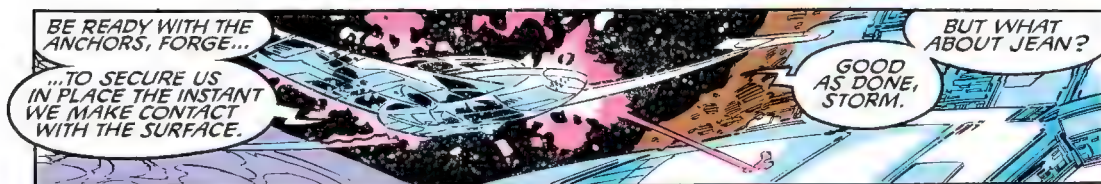
CAN'T SAY THAT'S MUCH OF A SURPRISE.

TRANSPARENT PLANE. STORM'S IDEA, FORGE'S DOING, I'LL BET.

VERY SNEAKY. I LIKE THAT.

SNKT!

BETTER MAKE SURE WE GIVE 'EM THE WELCOME THEY DESERVE.

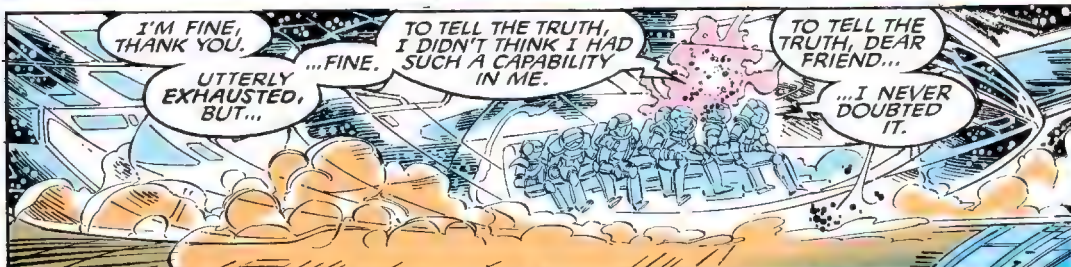


BE READY WITH THE ANCHORS, FORGE...

...TO SECURE US IN PLACE THE INSTANT WE MAKE CONTACT WITH THE SURFACE.

BUT WHAT ABOUT JEAN?

GOOD AS DONE, STORM.



I'M FINE, THANK YOU.

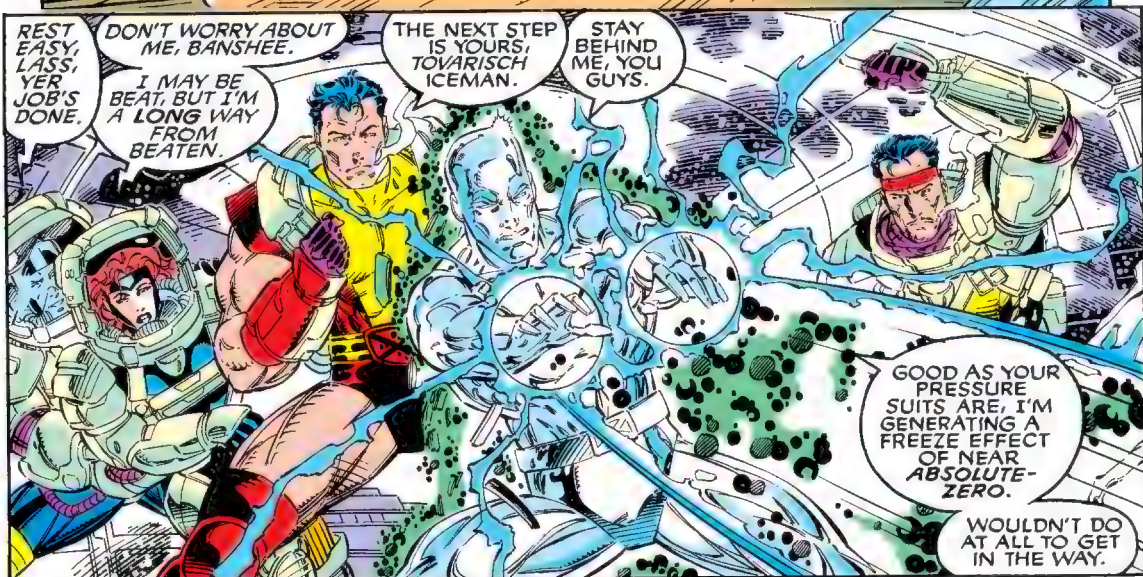
...FINE.

UTTERLY EXHAUSTED, BUT...

TO TELL THE TRUTH, I DIDN'T THINK I HAD SUCH A CAPABILITY IN ME.

TO TELL THE TRUTH, DEAR FRIEND...

...I NEVER DOUBTED IT.



REST EASY, LASS, YER JOB'S DONE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, BANSHEE.

I MAY BE BEAT, BUT I'M A LONG WAY FROM BEATEN.

THE NEXT STEP IS YOURS, TOVARISCH ICEMAN.

STAY BEHIND ME, YOU GUYS.

GOOD AS YOUR PRESSURE SUITS ARE, I'M GENERATING A FREEZE EFFECT OF NEAR ABSOLUTE-ZERO.

WOULDN'T DO AT ALL TO GET IN THE WAY.



OVER TO YOU, BIG GUY. GO TO TOWN!

YOUR SOLID ARMOR BODY SHOULD PROTECT YOU FROM THE COLD. ANYONE ELSE, THEY'D FREEZE TO THE METAL WITH A TOUCH.

THE COLD ALSO SHOULD HAVE RENDERED THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THE WALL BRITTLE AS CLAY.



ONE GOOD PUNCH SHOULD DO THE TRICK.

MY SPECIALTY.

AND MY PLEASURE.

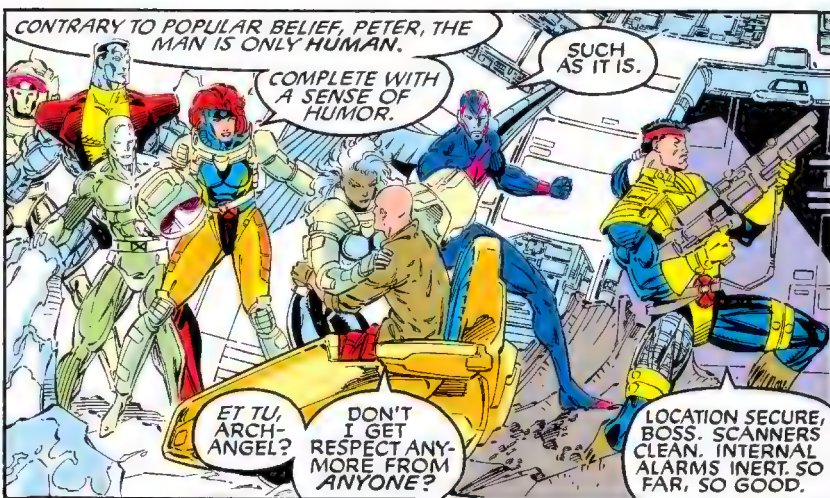


YOUR PARDON, SIR, WE ARE HERE TO SEE A MAN ABOUT A RESCUE.

PITY. I WAS HOPING FOR A PIZZA DELIVERY.

IS PROFESSOR XAVIER UNWELL, STORM?

HE IS MAKING A JOKE!



CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, PETER, THE MAN IS ONLY HUMAN.

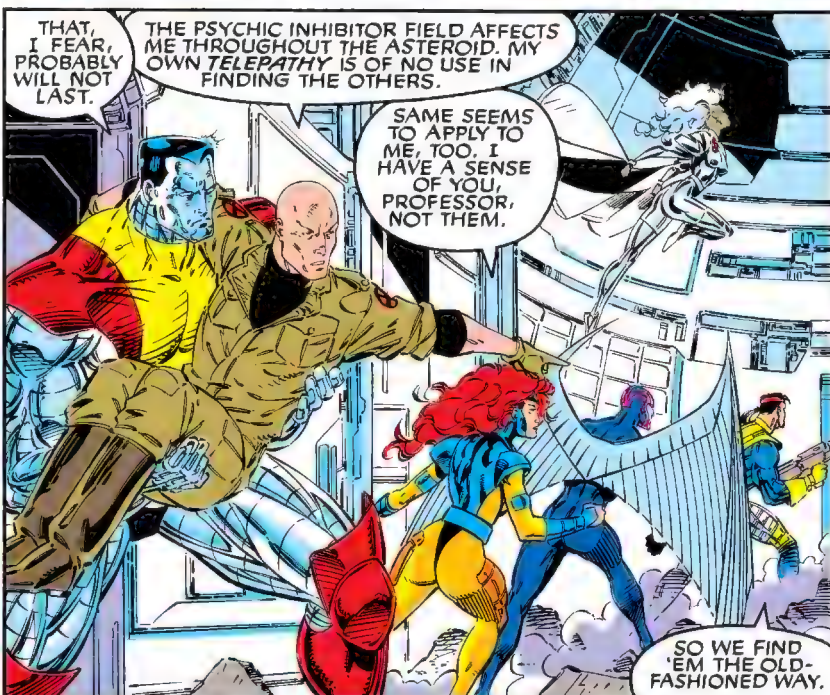
COMPLETE WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR.

SUCH AS IT IS.

ET TU, ARCH-ANGEL?

DON'T I GET RESPECT ANYMORE FROM ANYONE?

LOCATION SECURE, BOSS. SCANNERS CLEAN. INTERNAL ALARMS INERT. SO FAR, SO GOOD.



THAT, I FEAR, PROBABLY WILL NOT LAST.

THE PSYCHIC INHIBITOR FIELD AFFECTS ME THROUGHOUT THE ASTEROID. MY OWN TELEPATHY IS OF NO USE IN FINDING THE OTHERS.

SAME SEEMS TO APPLY TO ME, TOO. I HAVE A SENSE OF YOU, PROFESSOR, NOT THEM.

SO WE FIND 'EM THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY.



NOT NECESSARY, FORGE.



WE'VE ALREADY FOUND YOU!

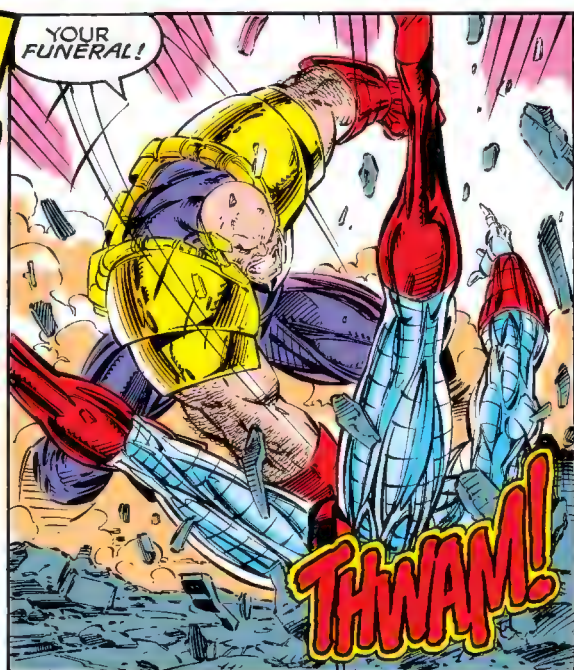
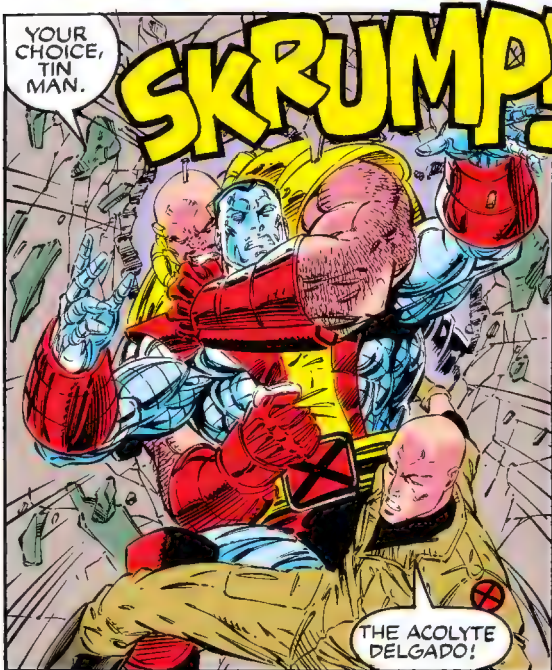
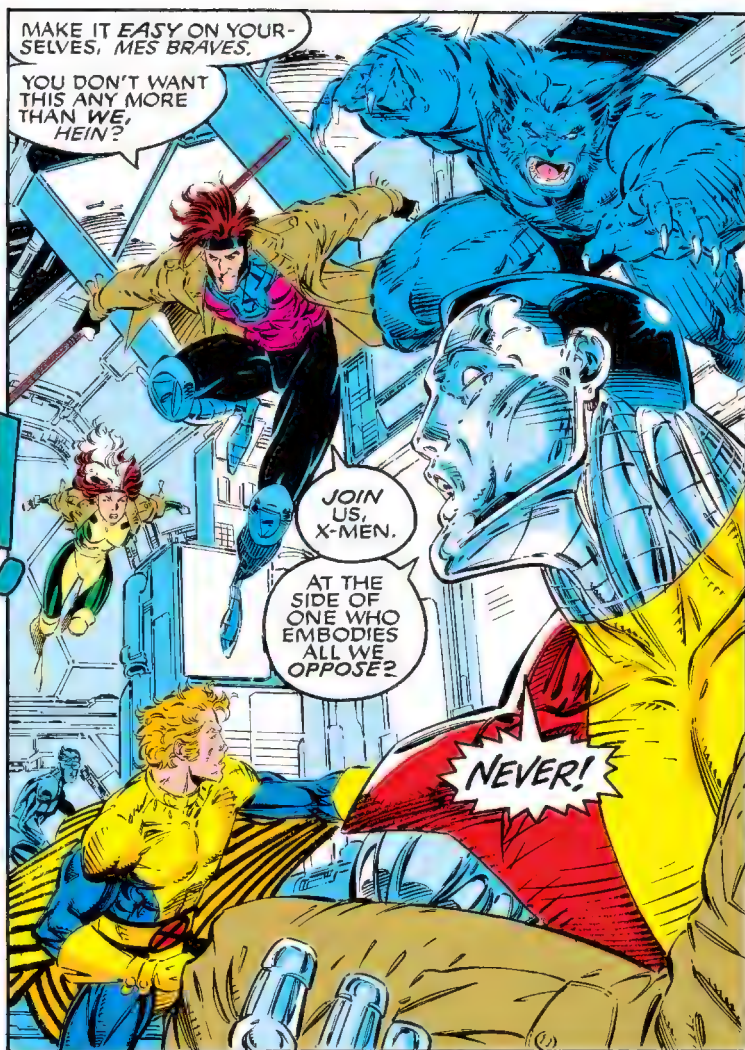
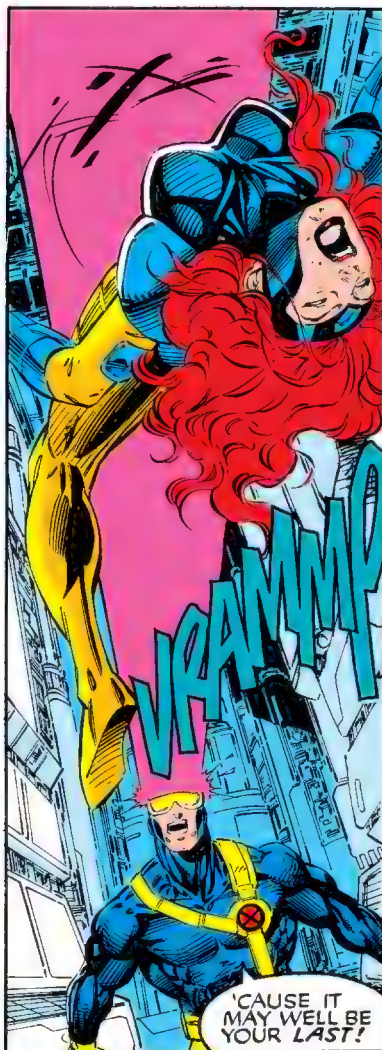


SO TELL ME, RED--

-- IS MY KISS AS MUCH FUN...

...AS WOLVERINE'S?

CYCLOPS!?!?



IF I MAY BE SO BOLD...

...THAT'S HARDLY THE WAY TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE...

...MUCH LESS MAKE FRIENDS.

KWUDD!

REVEALING YOUR TRUE COLORS, M'SIEU BETE?

NO MATTER, WHEN THIS IS FINISHED...

...WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU SEE THE LIGHT.

KRAK!

YOUR WAY OR NO-THING, THAT THE TICKET, GAMBIT?

CAST ASIDE THE PAST LIKE A SNAKE SHEDDING ITS SKIN, AS THOUGH IT WAS NOTHING?

BLAST THE MAN! HOW CAN HE BE BLOCKING MY EVERY SHOT?!

BLAZES, HE'S DEFLECTING THEM BACK AT ME.

SHIELD'S STOPPING MOST--

AKGH!

LAST ONE CLIPPED MY PROSTHETIC LEG. ONLY A SURFACE STRIKE, THOUGH, NO MAJOR DAMAGE.

CAJUN'S NAILED, FORGE.

STORM'S GOING AFTER ROGUE, ANYONE ELSE DOWN HERE NEED A HAND?

BWUDD!

ONLY ONE PERSON AT THE MOMENT, ICEMAN.



REGRETTABLY, THOUGH, ANY POSSIBLE DELIVERANCE FROM YOUR TEAM-MATES...

You!

...WILL COME TOO LATE!



Wugh!

BUT PSYLOCKE'S OUT-SMARTED HERSELF. FOR WHILE HER PSYCHIC KNIFE DOES INDEED DISRUPT THE STRUCTURE OF ICEMAN'S BRAIN...



...IT ALSO TRIGGERS AN UN-CONTROLLABLE, BROAD-BAND OUTBURST OF ENERGY FROM HIM THAT LEAVES EVERYTHING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY SHEETED IN ICE-- INCLUDING HER.



MEANWHILE...

TK'S STILL TOO WEAK TO DEFEND MYSELF.

MY TELEPATHY'S ALLOWING ME TO ANTICIPATE SCOTT'S TARGETS A SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE HE FIRES...

... BUT I CAN'T MAINTAIN THIS PACE. MY BODY'S TIRING TOO MUCH TO KEEP DODGING HIS OPTIC BLASTS.



CYCLOPS-- ALL OF YOU--

--STOP!

ROGUE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

HAVE YOU BETRAYED THE CAUSE, TOO?!!

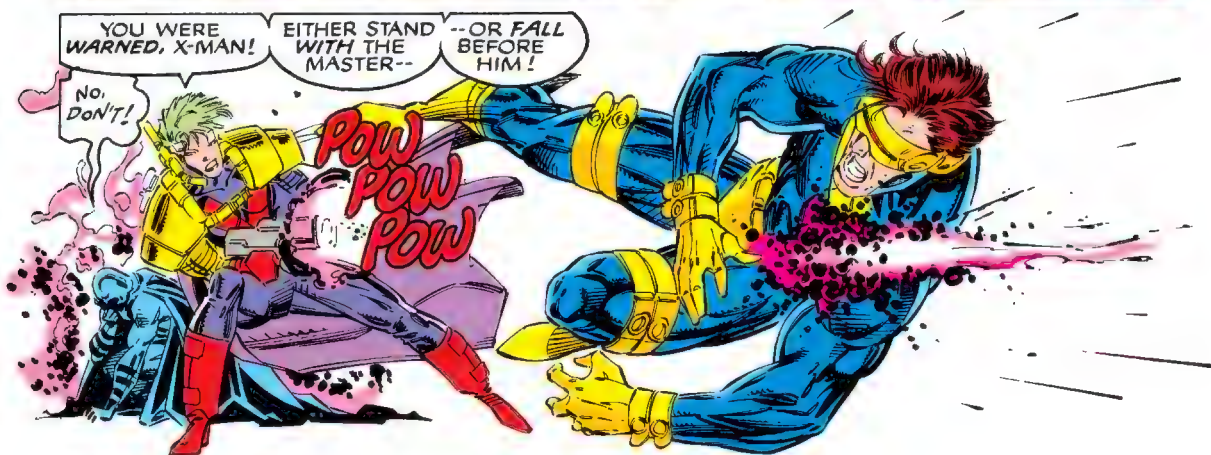
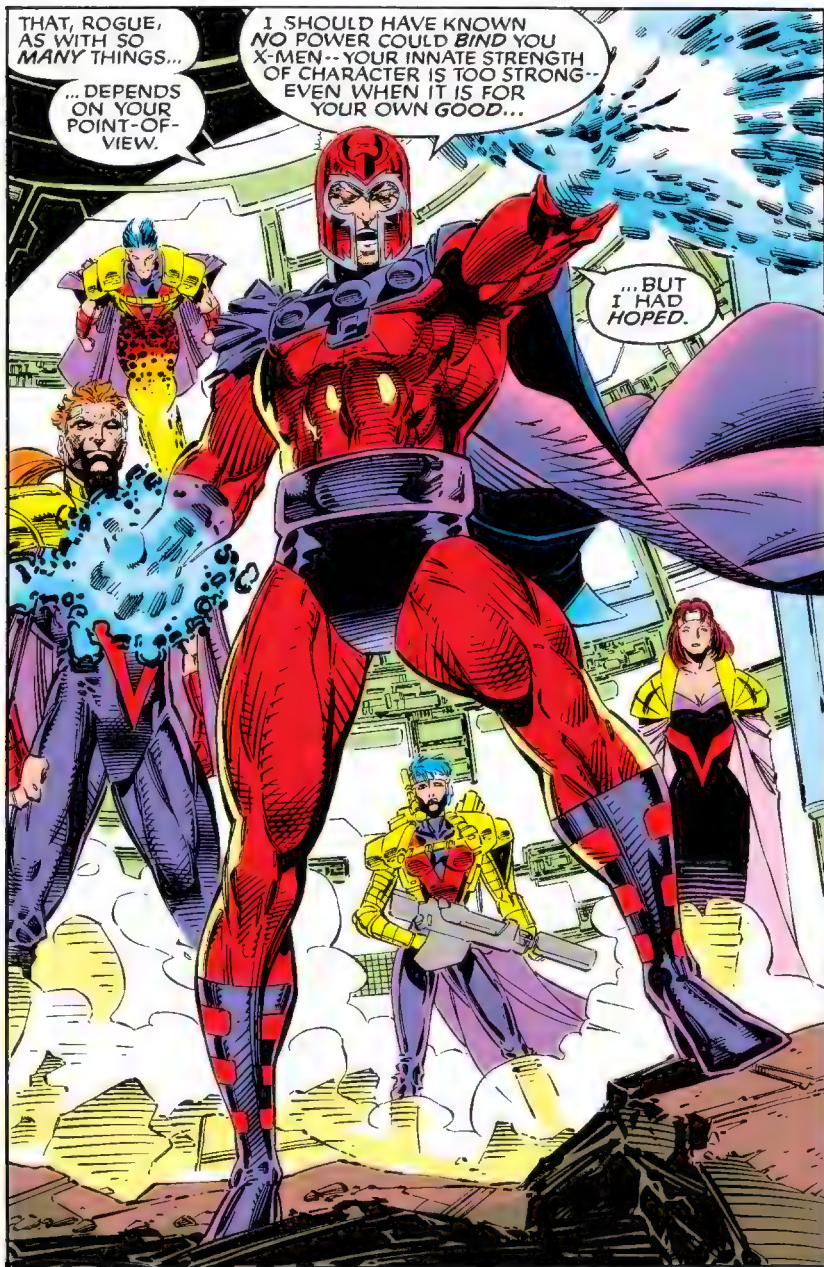
ZARK!

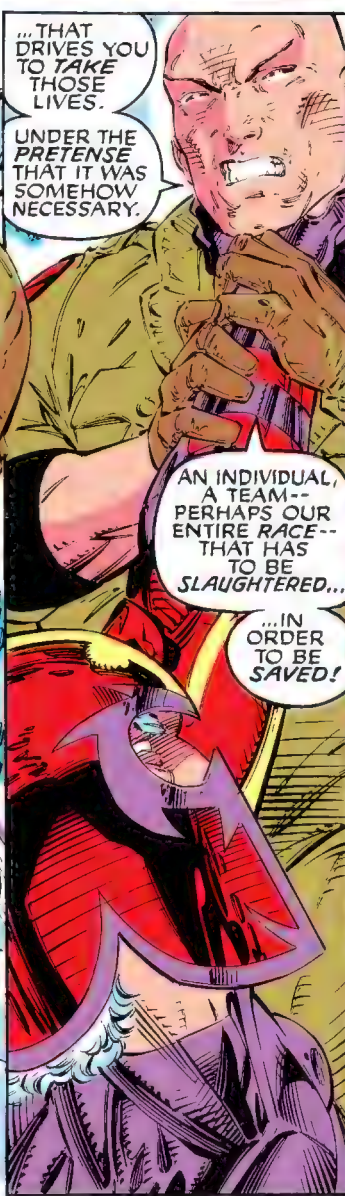
WAIT--
--THIS IS INSANE--
--WHAT AM I DOING?!

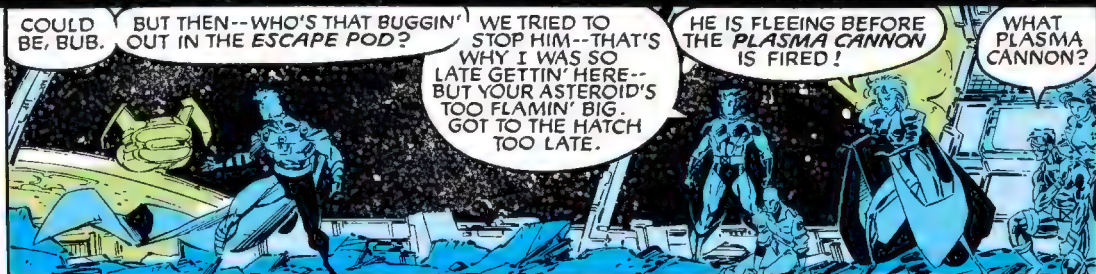
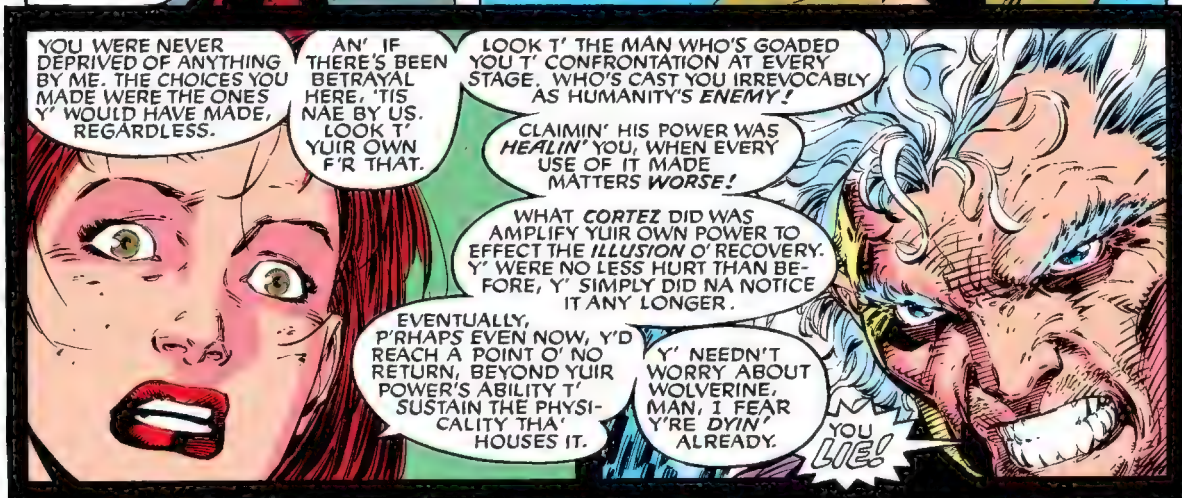
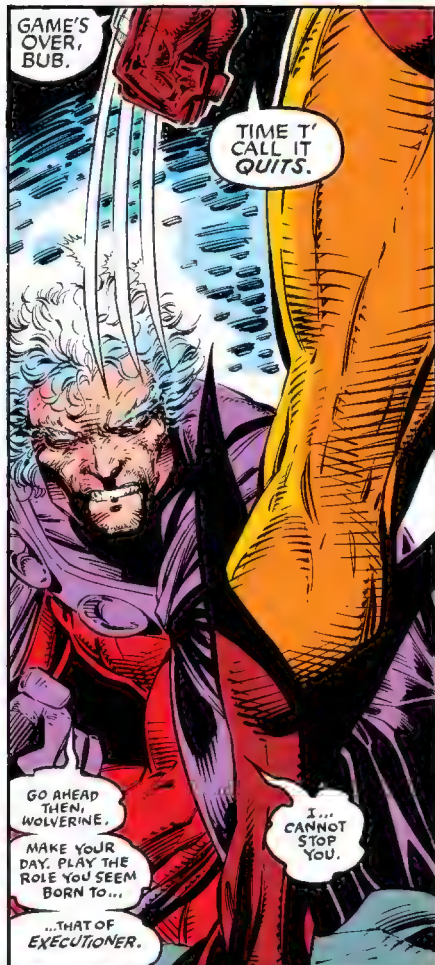
AIN'T ALT'GETHER SURE MYSELF...

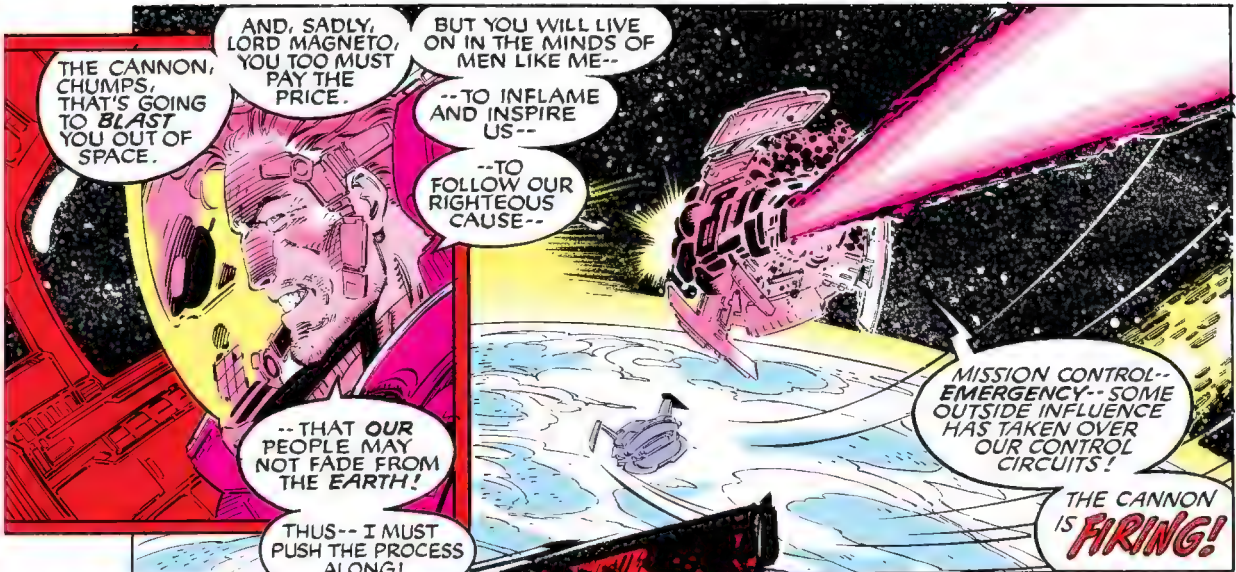
'CEPT WE'RE SIDIN' WITH OUR DEADLIEST FOES AGAINST OUR NEAREST AN' DEAREST...

... AN' THAT AIN'T NATURAL!









THE CANNON, CHUMPS, THAT'S GOING TO BLAST YOU OUT OF SPACE.

AND, SADLY, LORD MAGNETO, YOU TOO MUST PAY THE PRICE.

BUT YOU WILL LIVE ON IN THE MINDS OF MEN LIKE ME--

--TO INFLAME AND INSPIRE US--

--TO FOLLOW OUR RIGHTEOUS CAUSE--

--THAT OUR PEOPLE MAY NOT FADE FROM THE EARTH!

THUS-- I MUST PUSH THE PROCESS ALONG!

MISSION CONTROL-- EMERGENCY-- SOME OUTSIDE INFLUENCE HAS TAKEN OVER OUR CONTROL CIRCUITS!

THE CANNON IS **FIRING!**

WITH, AS PREDICTED, AS FEARED, DEVASTATING RESULTS.

THE BEAM BURNS THROUGH SOLID ROCK AS THOUGH THE ASTEROID HAD NO MORE SUBSTANCE THAN A CLOUD.

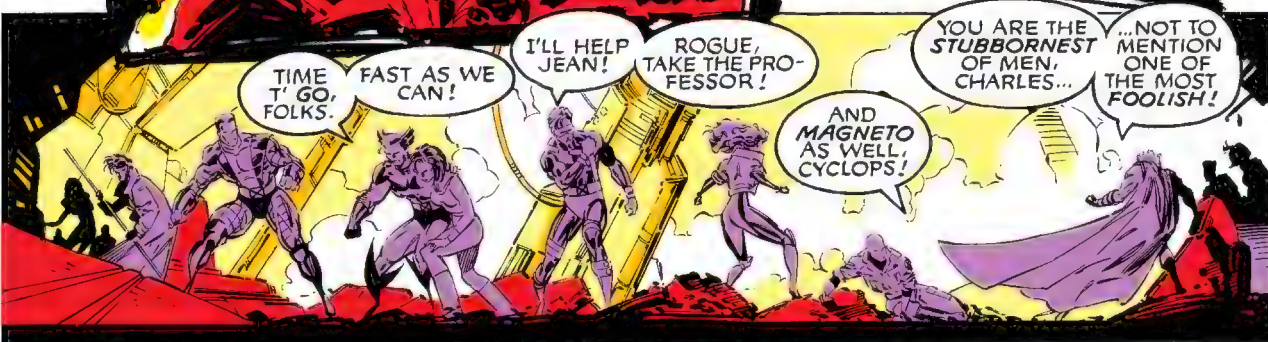
AND BECAUSE ITS INTERNAL SYSTEMS-- INDEED, IN SOME MEASURE, THE PHYSICAL FABRIC OF THE PLANETOID-- ARE LINKED WITH MAGNETO HIMSELF...

... HE IS STRUCK AS HARD, PERHAPS EVEN AS FATALLY, AS HIS HOME.

A... MASTERFUL STRATAGEM. IN ADDITION TO THE PLASMA BEAM, CORTEZ ATTEMPTED TO SIMULTANEOUSLY IGNITE THE NUCLEAR WARHEADS...

... OF THE MISSILES I HAD ARRAYED ABOUT MY ASTEROID AS A DEFENSIVE MEASURE.

I HAVE MAGNETICALLY... DISABLED THE TRIGGERS. THE WEAPONS ARE USELESS.



TIME T' GO, FOLKS.

FAST AS WE CAN!

I'LL HELP JEAN!

ROGUE, TAKE THE PROFESSOR!

AND MAGNETO AS WELL, CYCLOPS!

YOU ARE THE STUBBORNEST OF MEN, CHARLES...

...NOT TO MENTION ONE OF THE MOST FOOLISH!

I HAVE ENCLOSED THE ASTEROID WITH AN ENERGY SHIELD, TO DEFLECT ANY FURTHER ATTACKS.

IT TAKES MY TOTAL CONCENTRATION TO MAINTAIN THE INTERNAL PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY OF THIS COMPLEX.

HERE I AM, HERE I WILL REMAIN.

IF YOU WON'T SAVE YOURSELF, AT LEAST THINK OF YOUR FOLLOWERS.

THERE'S ROOM IN THE X-WING, COME WITH US, I BEG YOU!

NO.

THEY HAVE MADE THEIR **FREE CHOICE**, CHARLES. SO HAVE I.

MY LIFE WAS SHAPED BY FORCES AND EVENTS NONE OF YOU CAN POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND.

YOU SPEAK TO THE BEST IN HUMANITY. I HAVE ENDURED THE WORST.

YOU IMAGINE THE REALITY OF THE HOLOCAUST, OF THE NAZI DEATH CAMPS. I GREW UP IN ONE.

PERHAPS, AS YOU SAY, I AM TAINTED BY BLOOD AND RAGE-- AND DEATH.

BUT PERHAPS AS WELL, THAT BLOOD AND RAGE AND DEATH COMPRISE THE **ARMOR** THAT WILL SUSTAIN ME AND THOSE WHO STAND BY ME THROUGH THE ORDEAL TO COME.

THE PAST IS PROLOGUE, OLD FRIEND. AND THE FUTURE I BEHOLD FOR YOU IS...

...WAR.

WE HAVE ALREADY CHOSEN OUR PATH.

CHOSEN **WHAT--** A LEGACY TO OUR CHILDREN OF UN-ENDING CONFLICT?

ARE YOUR HEART AND SOUL SO **BLACK**?

PROFESSOR, WE GOTTA GO!

IT'S NO USE TALKIN', AH SEE THAT NOW.

Y'ALL MAY USE THE SAME WORDS, BUT YOU DON'T SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE. AH WONDER IF Y'EVER DID.

LEAVE ME BE, ROGUE! I WON'T PERMIT THIS!

THAT DECISION, CHARLES, IS NOT YOURS TO MAKE.

FAREWELL, MY OLD FRIEND.

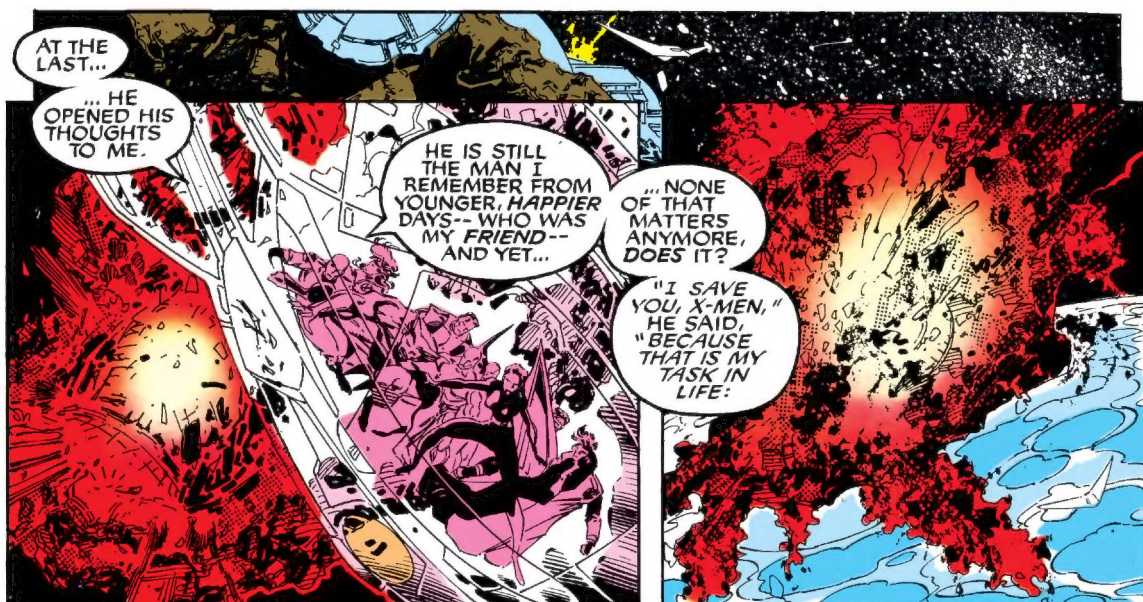
WHATEVER COMES, I AND MINE WILL NOT GO LIKE LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER-- BUT LIKE TIGERS.

NO-- **MAGNETO--** THIS ISN'T THE ANSWER, IT ISN'T THE WAY--

WE'RE ABOARD, STORM! HATCH IS SEALED TIGHT!

GET US **OUTTA** HERE!

NO!



AT THE
LAST...

... HE
OPENED HIS
THOUGHTS
TO ME.

HE IS STILL
THE MAN I
REMEMBER FROM
YOUNGER, HAPPIER
DAYS-- WHO WAS
MY FRIEND--
AND YET...

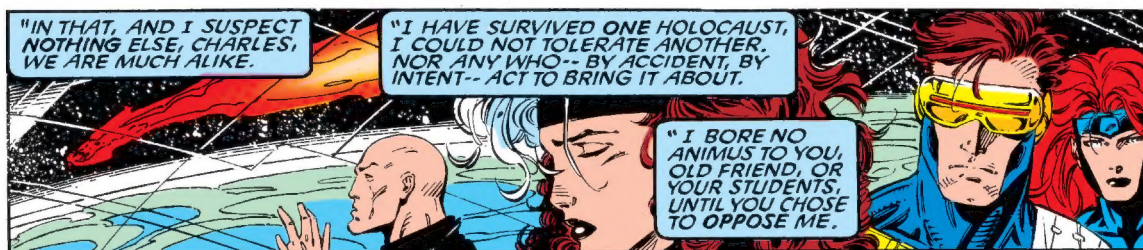
"... NONE
OF THAT
MATTERS
ANYMORE,
DOES IT?"

"I SAVE
YOU, X-MEN,"
HE SAID,
"BECAUSE
THAT IS MY
TASK IN
LIFE:



"...TO SAFEGUARD MY PEOPLE--
HOMO SAPIENS SUPERIOR--
MUTANTKIND-- FROM THOSE
WHO WOULD DO US HARM.

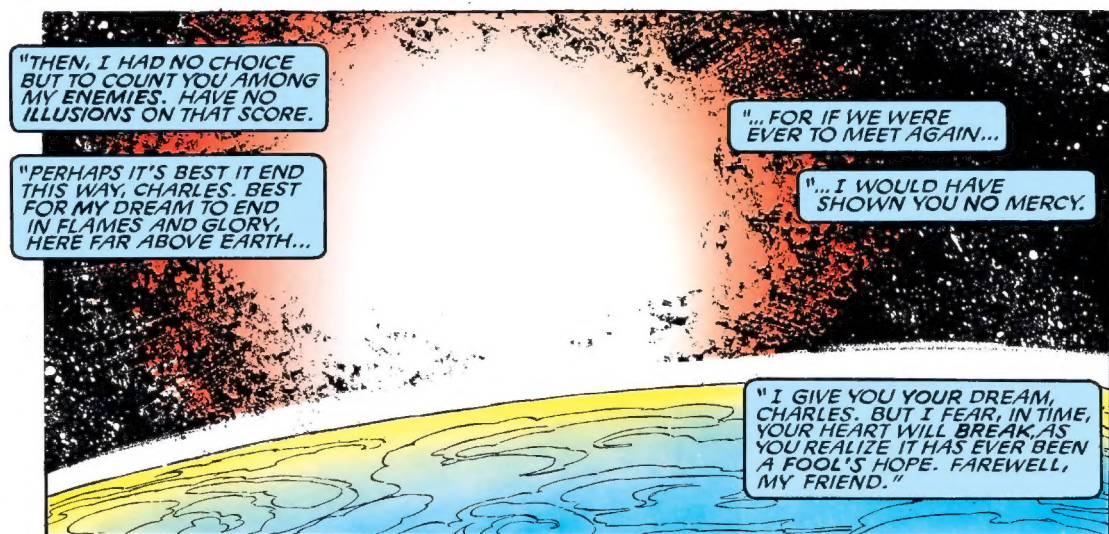
"AND THOSE
FORCES ARE
LEGION.



"IN THAT, AND I SUSPECT
NOTHING ELSE, CHARLES,
WE ARE MUCH ALIKE.

"I HAVE SURVIVED ONE HOLOCAUST,
I COULD NOT TOLERATE ANOTHER.
NOR ANY WHO-- BY ACCIDENT, BY
INTENT-- ACT TO BRING IT ABOUT.

"I BORE NO
ANIMUS TO YOU,
OLD FRIEND, OR
YOUR STUDENTS,
UNTIL YOU CHOSE
TO OPPOSE ME.



"THEN, I HAD NO CHOICE
BUT TO COUNT YOU AMONG
MY ENEMIES. HAVE NO
ILLUSIONS ON THAT SCORE.

"PERHAPS IT'S BEST IT END
THIS WAY, CHARLES. BEST
FOR MY DREAM TO END
IN FLAMES AND GLORY,
HERE FAR ABOVE EARTH...

"... FOR IF WE WERE
EVER TO MEET AGAIN...

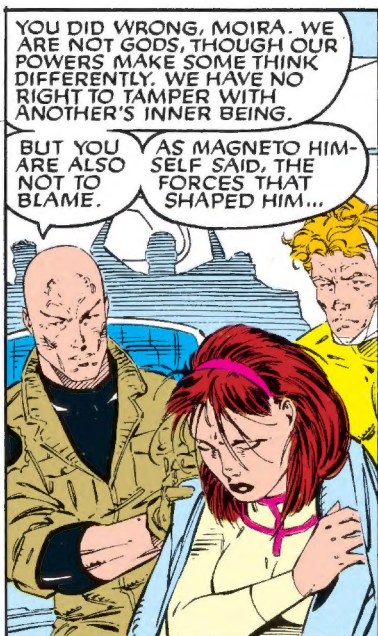
"... I WOULD HAVE
SHOWN YOU NO MERCY.

"I GIVE YOU YOUR DREAM,
CHARLES. BUT I FEAR, IN TIME,
YOUR HEART WILL BREAK, AS
YOU REALIZE IT HAS EVER BEEN
A FOOL'S HOPE. FAREWELL,
MY FRIEND."



GOTTA SAY THIS FOR THE MAN--

--HE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE AN EXIT.



YOU DID WRONG, MOIRA. WE ARE NOT GODS, THOUGH OUR POWERS MAKE SOME THINK DIFFERENTLY. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAMPER WITH ANOTHER'S INNER BEING.

BUT YOU ARE ALSO NOT TO BLAME.

AS MAGNETO HIMSELF SAID, THE FORCES THAT SHAPED HIM...



...DID THEIR WORK LONG BEFORE THE X-MEN WERE EVEN BORN.

NOW PERHAPS THE TIME HAS COME TO DO SOME SHAPING OF OUR OWN.

TO ACT ON THE STAGE OF HISTORY.



LIKE MAGETO, WE HAVE MADE CHOICES IN OUR LIVES. WE HAVE TAKEN OUR STAND FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IN. WE WERE BOTH HAUNTED MEN, HIM BY A NIGHTMARE, ME BY A DREAM.

TIME WILL TELL WHICH OF US WAS RIGHT.

HIS CHOICE WAS EVER FUELED BY RAGE, TAINTED BY THE DESPAIR THAT SCARS HIS SOUL.

AS OURS, I PRAY, WILL BE SUSTAINED BY HOPE.

WE HAVE IT WITHIN OURSELVES, X-MEN-- AS DO ALL PEOPLE, WHETHER MUTANTS OR NO-- TO LEAVE OUR WORLD BETTER THAN WE FOUND IT.

TO STRIVE FOR THE HEIGHTS OF OUR POTENTIAL, TO SEEK OUT THE BEST IN OURSELVES AND IN OTHERS, WHERE MAGNETO WOULD HAVE AUTOMATICALLY ASSUMED THE WORST.



YES, THAT IS AN IDEAL. PERHAPS AN UNATTAINABLE ONE. BUT SUCCESS IN THIS IS NOT WHAT IS IMPORTANT.

WHAT MATTERS IS THE ATTEMPT, AND OUR POWERS, OUR ROLE AS HEROES-- PERHAPS EVEN THE SIMPLE FACT THAT WE LIVE-- GIVES US THE OBLIGATION TO TRY.

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NEXT: OMEGA RED!



MINUTEMEN

Bluntman